

BATTLE IN A TREE.

How Bold Robin Redbreast Vanquished His Enemy.

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They were a very devoted couple just at this time, though I have reason to believe that at other seasons of the year they nagged at one another a good bit, like other husbands and wives. He was a handsome fellow, and as for her she was as fond and affectionate as a lovesick little robin redbreast can be. They had built and furnished their house in the topmost branches of the only tree in our street, close to my study window—a poplar—and I enjoyed a splendid view of their honeymooning, and of his kindnesses and courtesy to her—behavior which made me smile as coming from him, because it was so very unlike him as he was for 11 months or so of the year. Well, they built what appeared to be a satisfactory home from their own point of view, and chirped and congratulated one another endlessly over the accomplishment. Soon after it was finished she laid an egg therein, and presently another; then a third and a fourth, and I think a fifth.

Then there came a time of comparative quiet; there was less chirping and idle conversation. She sat and dozed on her eggs as he did much the same upon the garden paling, or on an adjacent branch of the poplar, or anywhere that came, looking deeply dejected. Occasionally when she left the house in order to get a bit of dinner or breakfast, he would go and sit on the edge of the nest, and sometimes hopped in and fussed around, and kept poking the eggs with his beak, turning them over and over and gloating over them in a way which displeased the missus, seemingly.

At last the eggs hatched and a busy time began; a time of innumerable expeditions on the part of both parents, foraging expeditions to every point of the compass; a time of funny noises from tiny, unseen personalities among the straws which formed their home; a bad time for the worms and such like game, for the youngsters were voracious and insatiable and kept their parents on the move all day and every day.

About a week after the hatching of the eggs, Thomas, the cat from No. 15, down this row, began to take an interest in the family. He had, apparently, made his calculations as to the hatching of those eggs, having watched the parent birds at their honeymooning, and, probably, taken a note of the date of the laying. When the youngsters were a week or so old, Thomas gave up all his other engagements in order to come and lie in my garden and gaze up into the poplar tree, and blink, flicking his lips at intervals. During this time nothing could seduce Thomas from this fascinating occupation. His friends would come over the wall and speak to him, and try to wean him from the contemplation of the robin's nest, but he took no notice of them, he hadn't time; his calculations were too absorbing. It was so difficult, you see, to decide as to the exact age at which a young robin has attained his high water mark of suzerainty.

So Thomas' friends would come and shake their heads over him and go and talk to their other acquaintances about the deplorable falling away of dear Thomas and the hope they entertained that he might still recover his lost ground when he should have got over that unfortunate craze of his. Some of the community laughed consumedly

and blinked up at their happy domestic home and calculated and licked his lips all day long. I thought it odd that these devoted parents should feel no anxiety as to the proceedings of Thomas. To me it seemed clear that his intentions were far from being honorable; yet these optimistic people either disregarded him altogether, or—if they observed his presence at all—desired to show their contempt for his machinations by pretending to be unaware of his existence.

But presently the little speckle-breasted boys and girls had nearly grown out of the parental mansion; they would take to flying soon; their fat little bodies were as succulent and delicious as they would ever be, and Thomas knew that the time had come for his climb. Thomas knew very well what had befallen Eliza. She had been foolhardy. Eliza had rushed the thing, and had been detected and ignominiously sent home by a combined attack of the enemy. Thomas intended to act with discretion and intelligence.

One morning Mr. Robin had left the premises upon a foraging expedition. Mrs. R—had absented herself upon a similar enterprise; the time had come. Thomas crept, snake-like, along the

wards—and it made him quite giddy, so high had he climbed. Also his paws and muscles generally were strained and weary, and the devil, in the shape of Mr. Robin, sat and yawned and watched him, as though with indifference, though with a very nasty look about the eye, up above. Thomas blinked and his ears lay back on his head with rage and fear, and his back tried to arch, but failed by reason of his uncomfortable attitude, which did not lay itself out for arching; and Thomas opened his mouth to swear or say his prayers, and I cannot say for certain which, because no sound came. Mr. Robin allowed Thomas to thoroughly enjoy his position for a minute or two; then he called up his wife. "Come on, missus," he cried, "and you shall see some fun; I have Thomas, the cat, on toast; no hurry!" or words to that effect. Mrs. Robin arrived at once and sat down to watch, and I verily believe the five little ones popped their heads out of the nest and watched also.

Mr. Robin now took the field. He quietly left his bough and poised himself in air close to Thomas' distracted person. Thomas rudely spat at him and viciously struck at him with one



THOMAS FOUND HIS VOICE.

grass of the lawn, looked up the poplar, blinked, opened his mouth without speaking, and jumped four or five feet up the long bare trunk of the tree. At the same instant Mr. Robin pere arrived on the scene. He darted quickly in from the opposite side, so that the trunk was between Thomas and himself, and settled himself quietly upon a branch, whence he could see all that passed.

The cat Thomas, ignorant of the proximity of danger, clung on to the trunk like grim death and hauled himself up a few feet. Mr. Robin, supremely ignorant of the circumstance, interested himself in a feather far away under his wing; he worked hard to find the feather, pulling it out at last, and letting it float out of his beak.

Thomas clung on to the tree trunk, all the claws of all his feet being requisitioned for the exertion, and stared up at the nest, gathering strength for a rush. Mr. Robin yawned and pretended to be deeply interested in the foliage of the poplar, which, of course, formed no portion of his real diet, though he picked at it now and nibbled a little, for effect. He did this in case Thomas should have caught sight of him, in order that Thomas might, in that case, suppose that his own movements had not been observed. The bare trunk of the poplar was a long one, you see, and Mr. Robin was anxious that Thomas should not be alarmed before he had reached an elevation which would suit the plans he had laid out. As a matter of fact Thomas had not seen him at all, up to now.

At length the assassin—the would-be assassin—took a long breath, blinked twice or thrice, and scrambled about 20 feet higher up the tree. Then he stopped to rest. Mr. Robin yawned again, spat out the leaf he was pretending to eat, chucked concealment to the winds and his own round body into the air, and flopped down upon the branch nearest to Thomas' head; to the unutterable disgust of that dishonest individual, who thus found himself suddenly in an extremely awkward position between the devil and the deep whom he rather resembled just now, sea—Mr. Robin representing the devil, and the drop of nearly 30 feet the deep sea.

Thomas looked upwards and perceived a climb of 15 feet, at least, to the nearest bough; he looked down-

ward of his front paws, which he unfastened from the bark of the tree for the purpose. This nearly lost him his hold and he quickly grabbed the trunk again and spat freely. Then Mr. Robin delivered his main attack. He swooped at Thomas and dug his businesslike beak into his head and his body; once, twice and a third time he repeated his blow, and Thomas found his voice and rummaged his vocabulary for all the worst things it contained.

But hard swearing did not save Thomas. He could not hit Mr. Robin back, because he knew that if he did he must let go his hold and fall to the earth. Nevertheless he did strike at Mr. Robin, for that hero had aimed a fourth and a fifth shot at him, and the attack was painful, as well as dangerous to the eyesight. Thomas flashed his wicked green orbs at the enemy—swore, spat and struck out at him. The inevitable happened, of course. Thomas fell.

A baffled, beaten, dejected cat was Thomas as he crept across the lawn, accompanied by Mr. Robin, who was now joined by his lady; and over the paling into No. 4 he went, and across No. 4 garden and into No. 3, still jeered at and insulted by his escort, and there I lost sight of the party. What sanctuary the defeated one sought I do not know; but this I know—that I saw no more of Thomas for many days, and when he did return his countenance wore that chastened expression which is assumed by those who have seen the error of their wicked ways and have made good resolutions for the future.

As for the little Robins, they grew up in peace, and in peace they took their ultimate departure, whither I know not.

It was after the departure of these birds and their heroic parents that Thomas reappeared in society.

A Close Calculation.
When the notorious Lueger, whose platform was the extinction of the Jews of Vienna, was up for election as burgomaster of that town a poor Jew took a bribe of a couple of florins to vote for him. "God will frustrate him," said the pious Jew. "Meanwhile, I have his money."—Household Words.

Suicide in Ireland.
Ireland, with a population of 4,704,000, has one of the smallest suicide rates in Europe—only ten to the million.

WOMAN AND HOME.

HOW TO POLISH SILVER.

Dear friends, a tale I'll tell (though perhaps you know it well).
How to polish up the silver till it shines.
Without labor when you're tired, house-keeper or help that's hired,
I will tell you all about it in these lines.

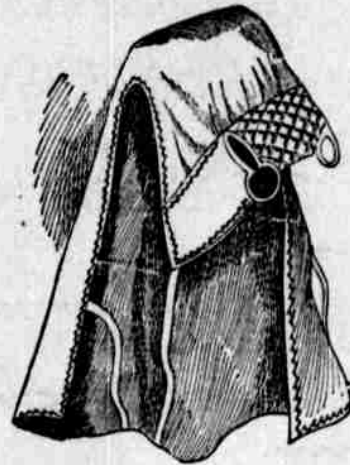
Peel potatoes three or four—though if small you might peel more—
Boil them just about three-quarters of an hour;
While they're boiling add some salt, or the whole will be in fault,
And your temper turned from sweet to awful sour.

Take a tarnished silver mug, spoon or sugar bowl, or jug.
Put them in and let them boil a little while;
When you take them out you'll find that the tarnish stayed behind,
And their brightness, I am sure, will make you smile.

—Good Housekeeping.

INFANT'S CLOTHING.

Many Excellent Reform Designs Have Been Exhibited Recently.
A great many designs have been brought before the world of mothers for infants' clothing. Several of these deserve full approval, as from a hygienic point of view they possess double the value of the old-fashioned patterns. Particularly is this reformation to be commended in the exclusion of the linen day shirt for the vast of finest hand-knitted or woven wool. The former tiny garment is no doubt pretty and dainty



BABY'S FLANNEL WRAPPER.

In appearance, but its comfort is much to be questioned. The woven vest may be described as an ideal shirt, as it contains the minimum of weight with the maximum of warmth. Its silky smoothness is comfortable to the tender skin, and it never falls into the chafing rucks and wrinkles of its linen companion.

The design for the long flannel is a thoroughly comfortable one. It is made with a little straight bodice cut from one piece of flannel and nicely ornamented with a trellis work of fine coral stitching worked in white working silk, which stitching also is carried around the rest of the bodice, giving a pretty effect. The armholes are merely hollowed out and secured by narrow straps of flannel. The entire bodice is bound with white lute ribbon. The depth of this little bodice when made should be five inches, the width about twenty-five inches, this allowing for a comfortable wrap over in front, the points at the back fastening neatly with silk strings. The skirt of the flannel is merely a straight piece some 25 inches in length and about 41 in width.—Chicago Chronicle.

BRUSHING THE TEETH.

The Proper Way in Which to Perform This Important Operation.

The upper teeth should be brushed downward and the lower teeth upward from the gums. Do not brush the teeth crossways, as they are apt to become loosened and the gums will also suffer. The inside of the teeth should be brushed in the same way. Tepid water is the best to use both for cleansing the teeth and rinsing the mouth out afterward.

The tooth brush should be small and curved, so that the bristles can get in all the interstices of the teeth. It should not be too hard, and, when a new tooth-brush is purchased, it should be soaked in water for several hours before using. If the brush is dried on a towel after being used, and stood up on end in the air, it will last much longer. Tooth-brushes should never be kept in closed receptacles.

Tooth powder should be chosen with great discretion. For general use the following will be found a very good powder: Mix together half an ounce of powdered bark, a quarter of an ounce of myrrh, one drachm of canphor and one ounce of prepared chalk.

Another simple recipe is as follows: Add two ounces of camphorated chalk, two drachms of very fine powdered borax, half an ounce of powdered orris-root and half a drachm of powdered myrrh; mix the ingredients thoroughly together and keep the powder in a stoppered bottle.—San Francisco Chronicle.

The Czarina's Coronet.
It is said by the authorities on jewels and jewelry that the coronet of the Russian empress is the most beautiful collection of diamonds ever gathered in one ornament. It is composed of four very large diamonds of the purest water and 18 others of slightly smaller size, together with a multitude of lesser diamonds of exquisite water. The flash of these beautiful gems reminds the observer of a collection of rainbows.

—Canon Owen, the newly-appointed bishop of St. David's, is a Welsh-speaking Welshman.

DRESSMAKING AN ART.

Perfect Fitting of a Gown Requires Careful Thought and Study.

The day has come when dressmakers can and do look upon their calling as a profession that commands respect. They are now rightfully termed artists, and are just as much entitled to the name of artist as the men and women who create lifelike statues from marble, or who with pencil and colors reproduce nature with master strokes, providing she does the work conscientiously, with careful thought and study, with always a regard for the eternal fitness of things.

No class of women anywhere has accomplished as much and made as much progress with so little help as have the dressmakers. Artists, doctors, lawyers and people in all professions have recourse to libraries whose shelves are piled with books containing valuable information and assistance in their line, but there is a curious dearth of literature on subjects useful to either the professional or amateur dressmaker.

While we have many American and foreign fashion journals sufficiently versatile and fetching in their styles of fabric and details of cut in dress, there is nothing to tell how to cut, fit, baste and sew, or the whys and wherefores of doing certain things in certain ways to obtain the best results. Dressmakers are prone to selfishness, and keep good points they may discover in their line to themselves, while in other professions more liberality is shown in this particular, and new ideas are published and spread broadcast for the good of all interested in the same line of thought and study. Until this narrow-mindedness is overcome, and dressmakers become more altruistic, they will labor at a disadvantage.

Many women who have talent for creating handsome, stylish and well-fitting gowns are denied the opportunity of showing their ability in this line, all for the want of opportunity to educate their propensities, and a friendly, sympathetic hand of encouragement from those whose knowledge is sufficient to lead the less fortunate. Dressmaking, when not properly understood, means the hardest and most wearing drudgery in which a woman can engage. But, properly studied, and practiced accordingly, it is made comparatively easy and very remunerative.—Mary K. Howard, in Woman's Home Companion.

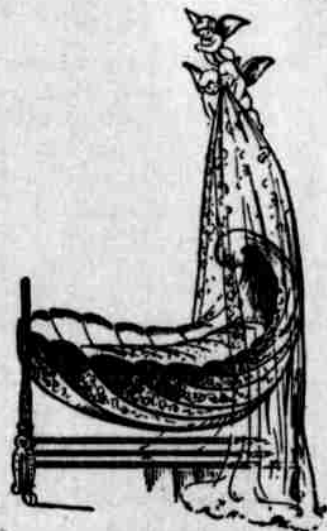
THE SHELL CRADLE.

Beautiful Novelty That Is Used for Play as Well as Sleep.

Babies should be healthy, for there were never so many things made for their health and comfort. The newest of these is a shell cradle, that can be used for play as well as for sleep.

This cradle is all in one piece, the material being either silver plate or white metal. There are solid silver shells for the goldspoon baby and aluminum shells for mothers that want a very light cradle, one that is easy to lift from room to room.

The shell is hung from two rods, one at either end. Its pivot is such that it swings at a touch. When baby is awake he can amuse himself by swaying his



SILVER AND LACE.

cradle back and forth. A wire framework supports the canopy, which is of lace upheld by metallic cupids. The lace can be drawn entirely over the sleeping baby.

Wicker clothes baskets can be used in the same way, but a carpenter must be employed to fasten the baskets to the uprights, or baby will be startled from his slumber by a fall. Cradles of metal are best because they can be kept thoroughly clean. When the small springs and bedding are removed the cradle can be washed like a dish.—St. Louis Globe-Democrat.

Grow Your Own Parsley.
Plant a box of parsley and place it on a window sill. You have no idea how many pennies may be saved by having parsley growing in the house. Thyme may also be planted for kitchen decoration.

How They Settled It.
Because her husband gambles, a Pine-grove (Pa.) woman sought a divorce. The matter has been adjourned by the offending husband promising not to play cards on Sunday.

Bloomers for Housemaids.
Lady Harberton advocates the adoption by housemaids of the bloomer costume, such as is worn by lady bicyclists. She says there would be fewer break-ages and accidents of all sorts.



CLOSE TO MY WINDOW.

over this phase of Thomas' career; they said they could not help recalling what happened to Eliza—another member of the society—a couple of years ago, when she took to bird hunting. She had made a bid for the season's brood of this very couple of robins and had faced badly at their hands—or heads; it had been a killing night, they said—killing! It might be there would be a parallel spectacle on this occasion, if Thomas really intended to make a bid for the youngsters up aloft.

Thomas certainly did intend to do so. He was only waiting until the proper moment; there was plenty of time! Every day, every hour, added its quota of succulent bird flesh to the already rotund little bodies in the nest! Ha, ha! the time would soon arrive! It was nearly here!

Mr. and Mrs. Robin took no notice whatever of Thomas—indeed, they never once betrayed the fact that they knew he was there, though Thomas lay